

R U T H.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Ruth is historically important as giving the lineage of David through the whole period of the rule of the Judges (i. 1), i.e. from Salmon who fought under Joshua, to "Jesse the Bethlehemite" (1 Sam. xvi. 1); and as illustrating the ancestry of "Jesus Christ, the son of David," who "was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matt. i. 1, ii. 1). The care with which this narrative was preserved through so many centuries before the birth of Christ is a striking evidence of the Providence of God, that "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." The genealogy with which the Book closes (iv. 18), is also an important contribution to the chronology of Scripture history. We learn from it, with great distinctness, that Salmon, one of the conquering host of Joshua, was the grandfather of Obed, who was the grandfather of king David; in other words, that four generations, or about 200 years, span the "days when the Judges ruled."

But the Book has another interest, from the charming view it gives us of the domestic life of pious Israelites even during the most troubled times. Had we only drawn our impressions from the records of violence and crime contained in the Book of Judges, we should have been ready to conclude that all the gentler virtues had fled from the land, while the children

of Israel were alternately struggling for their lives and liberties with the tribes of Canaan, or yielding themselves to the seductions of Canaanite idolatry. But the Book of Ruth, lifting up the curtain which veiled the privacy of domestic life, discloses to us most beautiful views of piety, integrity, self-sacrificing affection, chastity, gentleness and charity, growing up amidst the rude scenes of war, discord, and strife.

The Book, from its contents, as anciently by its place in the Canon, belongs to the Book of Judges, and is a kind of appendix to it. In the present Hebrew Bible it is placed among the *Cethubim* or *Hagiographa*, in the group containing the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; but in the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate it occupies the same place as in our English Bibles, which was its ancient place in the Hebrew Bible.

The language of the Book is generally pure Hebrew. But there are words of Chaldee form and origin,¹ and other expressions peculiar to the later Hebrew. The inference would be that the Book of Ruth was composed not before the later times of the Jewish monarchy;

¹ E.g., the originals of the verbs *go*, *abide fast* (ii. 8), *lay thee down*, *thou shalt do* (iii. 4), *put*, *get thee down* (iii. 3), *confirm* (iv. 7); the word translated twice *for them* but meaning *therefore* (i. 13), *Mara* (i. 20).

and this inference is somewhat strengthened by the way in which the writer speaks of the custom which prevailed *in former time* in Israel (iv. 7). Other expressions, which the Book has in common with the Books of Samuel and Kings, and a certain similarity of narrative, tend to place it upon about the same level of antiquity with those Books.²

The Books of the Old Testament, to the contents of which reference seems to be made in the Book of Ruth, are Judges, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Genesis, 1 and 2 Samuel, and perhaps Job. Ruth is not quoted or referred to in the New

Testament, except that the generations from Hezron to David in our Lord's genealogy seem to be taken from it.

No mystical or allegorical sense can be assigned to the history; but Ruth, the Moabitess, was undoubtedly one of the first fruits of the ingathering of Gentiles into the Church of Christ, and so an evidence of God's gracious purpose in Christ, "also to the Gentiles to grant repentance unto life;" and the important evangelical lesson is as plainly taught in her case, as in that of Cornelius, "that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him." The great doctrine of Divine Grace is also forcibly taught by the admission of Ruth, the Moabitess, among the ancestry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

² *E. g.*, originals of *Such a one* (iv. 1); *the Lord do so to me, and more also* (i. 17); *the beginning of barley harvest* (i. 22); *lifted up their voice and wept* (i. 9, 14); *blessed be he of the Lord* (ii. 20).

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

CHAP. 1. NOW it came to pass in the days when ^athe judges ruled, that there was ^ba famine in the land. And a certain man of ^cBeth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, ^dEphrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came ^einto the country of Moab, and ^fcontinued there. ¶ And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her ^gtwo sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. ¶ Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had ^hvisited his people in ⁱgiving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, ^jGo, return each to her mother's house: ^kthe LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find ^lrest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. ¶ And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? *are there yet any more sons in my womb,*

^a Judg. 2. 16.

^b See Gen.

12. 10.

^c Kin. 8. 1.

^d Judg. 17. 8.

^e See Gen.

35. 19.

^f Judg. 3. 30.

^g Ex. 4. 31.

Luke 1. 69.

^h Ps. 132. 15.

ⁱ Matt. 6. 11.

^j See Josh.

24. 15.

^k 2 Tim. 1.

10, 17, 18.

^l ver. 5.

ch. 2. 20.

^m ch. 3. 1.

¹ Heb. *judged*.

² Heb. *were*.

I. 1. *in the days when the Judges ruled* ["Judged."] This note of time, like that in iv. 7, xviii. 1; Judg. xvii. 6, indicates that this book was written after the rule of the Judges had ceased. The genealogy (iv. 17-22) points to the time of David as the earliest when the book could have been written. *a famine* Caused probably by one of the hostile invasions recorded in the Book of Judges. Most of the Jewish commentators, from the mention of Bethlehem, and the resemblance of the names Boaz and Ibzan, refer this history to the judge Ibzan (Judg. xii. 8), but without probability.

the country of Moab Here, and in vv. 2, 22, and iv. 3, literally "the field" or "fields." As the same word is elsewhere used of the territory of Moab, of the Amalekites, of Edom, and of the Philistines, it would seem to be a term pointedly used with reference to a foreign country, not the country of the speaker, or writer; and to have been specially applied to Moab.

4. Marriages of Israelites with women of

Ammon or Moab are nowhere in the Law expressly forbidden, as were marriages with the women of Canaan (Deut. vii. 1-3). In the days of Nehemiah the special law (Deut. xxiii. 3-6) was interpreted as forbidding them, and as excluding the children of such marriages from the congregation of Israel (Neh. xiii. 1-3). Probably the marriages of Mahlon and Chilion would be justified by necessity, living as they were in a foreign land. Ruth was the wife of the elder brother, Mahlon (iv. 10).

8. The accompanying their mother-in-law to the borders of their own land would probably be an act of Oriental courtesy. Naomi with no less courtesy presses them to return. The mention of the *mother's* house, which the separation of the women's house or tent from that of the men facilitates, is natural in her mouth, and has more tenderness in it than *father's house* would have had; it does not imply the death of their fathers (ii. 11).

11-13. See marg. ref. and notes. The

^m Gen. 38.
11.
Deut. 25. 5.

ⁿ Judg. 2. 15.
Job 19. 21.
Ps. 32. 4.
^o Prov. 17.
17.

^p Judg. 11.
24.

^q See Josh.
24. 15, 19.

^r 2 Kin. 2. 2.
^s 2 Kin. 2.
2, 4, 6.

^t ch. 2. 11.

^u 1 Sam. 3.

^v 17. & 25. 22.

^w 2 Sam. 19.

^x 13.

^y 2 Kin. 6. 31.

^z Acts 21. 14.

^{aa} Matt. 21. 10.

^{ab} See Isai.

^{ac} 23. 7.

^{ad} Lam. 2. 15.

^{ae} Job 1. 21.

^{af} Ex. 9. 31,

^{ag} 32.

^{ah} ch. 2. 23.

^{ai} 2 Sam. 21. 9.

^{aj} ch. 3. 2.

^{ak} ch. 4. 21.

^{al} Lev. 19. 9.

^{am} Deut. 24. 19.

12 ^mthat they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, ¹*if* I should have an husband also to night, 13 and should also bear sons; would ye ²tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for ³it grieveth me much for your sakes 14 that ⁿthe hand of the LORD is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth ^oclave unto her. ¶ And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto 15 her gods: ^preturn thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, ^qIntreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: ^rthy people *shall be* my people, and thy 17 God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: ^sthe LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but 18 death part thee and me. ^tWhen she saw that she ^uwas stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. 19 ¶ So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that ^vall the city was moved about them, and they said, ^w*Is this Naomi?* 20 And she said unto them, Call me not ^xNaomi, call me ^yMara: 21 for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, ^zand the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why ^{aa}then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against 22 me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? ¶ So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem ^{ab}in the beginning of barley harvest.

CHAP. 2. AND Naomi had a ^{ac}kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* 2 ^{ad}Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and ^{ae}glean ears of corn after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

¹ Or, if I were with an husband.

² Heb. *hope*.

³ Heb. *I have much bitterness*.

⁴ Or, *Be not against me*.

⁵ Heb. *strengthened herself*.

⁶ That is, *Pleasant*.

⁷ That is, *Bitter*.

⁸ Called Boaz, Matt. 1. 5.

Levirate law probably existed among the Moabites, and in Israel extended beyond the *brother* in the strict sense, and applied to the nearest relations, since Boaz was only the kinsman of Elimelech (iii. 12).

14. The kiss at parting as well as at meeting is the customary friendly and respectful salutation in the East. The difference between mere kindness of manner and self-sacrificing love is most vividly depicted in the words and conduct of the two women. Ruth's determination is steadfast to cast in her lot with the people of the Lord (cp. marg. reff. and Matt. xv. 22-28).

19. *and they said*] i.e. the women of Beth-lehem said. *Thy* in the Hebrew is feminine.

20. See marg. Similar allusions to the meaning of names are seen in Gen. xxvii. 36; Jer. xx. 3.

the Almighty] Shaddai (see Gen. xvii. 1

note). The name ALMIGHTY is almost peculiar to the Pentateuch, and to the Book of Job. It occurs twice in the Psalms, and four times in the Prophets.

21. *the LORD hath testified against me*] The phrase is very commonly applied to a man who gives witness concerning (usually against) another in a court of justice (Ex. xx. 16; 2 Sam. i. 16; Isai. iii. 9). Naomi in the bitterness of her spirit complains that the Lord Himself was turned against her, and was bringing her sins up for judgment.

II. 1. *a kinsman*] More literally *an acquaintance*; here (and in the feminine, iii. 2) denoting the person with whom one is intimately acquainted, one's near relation. The next kinsman of ii. 20, &c. (*goel*), is a wholly different word.

Boaz] Commonly taken to mean, *strength is in him* (cp. 1 K. vii. 21).

- 3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her ¹hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging*
 4 unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech. ¶ And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, ^dThe LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless ^{8.} thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the ^{8.} reapers, Whose damsel *is* this? And the servant that was set ² over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel ^{10.} ^e that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.
 8 ¶ Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but ^f abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the ¹ young men have drawn. Then she ¹ fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, ¹ seeing I *am* a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, ^g all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.
 12 ^h The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, ⁱ under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, ^{2k} Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord: for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken ³ friendly unto thine handmaid, ⁴ though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her, At mealtine come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and ^m was sufficed, and left. ¶ And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz com-

^d Ps. 129. 7.
^{8.} Luke 1. 28.
² Thess. 3. 10.

^e ch. 1. 22.

^f 1 Sam. 25. 23.

^g ch. 1. 14, 16, 17.

^h 1 Sam. 24. 19.
ⁱ ch. 1. 16.
^{2k} Ps. 17. 8.
³ & 30. 7.
⁴ & 57. 1.
⁴ & 63. 7.
⁵ Gen. 33. 15.
¹ 1 Sam. 1. 18.
¹ 1 Sam. 25. 41.
^m ver. 18.

¹ Heb. *hap happened*.
² Or, *I find favour*.

³ Heb. *to the heart*, Gen. 34. 3. Judg. 19. 3.

7. *the house*] The shed or booth where they took their meals, and were sheltered from the sun in the heat of the day (see Gen. xxxiii. 17).

8. The grammatical forms of the verbs "go hence" and "abide," are peculiar and Chaldaic. They are supposed to indicate the dialect used at Bethlehem in the time of Boaz.

9. *after them*] i.e. after my maidens. The fields not being divided by hedges, but only by *baulks*, it would be easy for her to pass off Boaz's land without being aware of it, and so find herself among strangers where Boaz could not protect her.

10. *she fell on her face*] With Oriental reverence (cp. Gen. xxxiii. 3, and marg. ref.).

12. The similarity of expression here to Gen. xv. 1, and in v. 11 to Gen. xii. 1,

makes it probable that Boaz had the case of Abraham in his mind.

the LORD God of Israel] "**Jehovah the God of Israel.**" Cp. Josh. xiv. 14, where, as here, the force of the addition, *the God of Israel*, lies in the person spoken of being a foreigner (see Judg. xi. 21 note).

14. To dip the morsel, or soup, whether it were bread or meat, in the *dish* containing the vinegar (cp. Matt. xxvi. 23; Mark xiv. 20; Ex. xxv. 29; Num. vii. 13) was, and still is, the common custom in the East.

parched or "**roasted**" corn] The common food of the country then (cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 17, xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xvii. 28) and now. *and left*] Or "**reserved**" (v. 18). Rather, "**had some over**" (cp. Luke xv. 17). Verse 18 tells us that she took to her mother-in-law what she had over.

- manded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the
 16 sheaves, and 'reproach her not: and let fall also *some* of the
 handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean
 17 *them*, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even,
 and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of
 18 barley. And she took *it* up, and went into the city: and her
 mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth,
 and gave to her *that* she had reserved after she was sufficed.
 19 ¶ And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned
 to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did
 "take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law
 with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with
 20 whom I wrought to day *is* Boaz. And Naomi said unto her
 daughter in law, "Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who *hath* not left
 off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said
 unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, "one of our next
 21 kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabite said, He said unto me also,
 Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended
 22 all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in
 law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens,
 23 that they *meet* thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by
 the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and
 of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.
- CHAP. 3.** THEN Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My
 daughter, "shall I not seek *rest* for thee, that it may be well
 2 with thee? And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, "with whose
 maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in
 3 the threshing-floor. Wash thyself therefore, *and* anoint thee,
 and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor:
but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have
 4 done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down,
 that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt
 go in, and *uncover* his feet, and lay thee down; and he will
 5 tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that
 6 thou sayest unto me I will do. ¶ And she went down unto the
 floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.
 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and *his* heart was merry,
- a* 1 Cor. 7. 36.
b 1 Tim. 5. 8.
c ch. 1. 9.
d ch. 2. 8.
e 2 Sam. 14. 2.
- e* Judg. 10. 6, 9, 22.
 2 Sam. 13. 29.
 Esth. 1. 10.
- 1 Heb. *shame her not*.
 2 Or, *one that hath right to redeem*.
- 3 Or, *full upon thee*.
 4 Or, *lift up the clothes that are on his feet*.

17. *and beat out that she had gleaned*] Viz. with a stick, as the word implies (cp. Deut. xxiv. 20; Isai. xxvii. 12). This method is still commonly practised. Ruth gleaned enough to support herself and her mother-in-law for five days (Ex. xvi. 16).

20. *Blessed be he of the LORD, &c.*] We may gather from Naomi's allusion to the dead that both her husband and son had been faithful servants of Jehovah, the God of Israel. His kindness to the dead consisted in raising up (as Naomi hoped) an heir to perpetuate the name; and, in general, in His care for their widows.

one of our next kinsmen] The word here is GOEL, the redeemer, who had the right (1) of redeeming the inheritance of the person; (2) of marrying the widow; (3) of avenging the death. (See Levit. xxv. 25-31, 47-55;

Deut. xxv. 5-10; xix. 1-13.) As these rights belonged to the next of kin, GOEL came to mean the nearest kinsman.

III. 2. *behold, he winnoweth barley, &c.*] The simple manners of Boaz and his times are here before us. This "mighty man of wealth" assists personally in the winnowing of his barley, which lies in a great heap on the floor (r. 15), and sleeps in the open threshing-floor to protect his grain from depredation.

to-night] For the sake of the breeze which springs up at sunset, and greatly facilitates the cleansing of the corn tossed up across the wind.

4. *uncover his feet*] Rather, "the place of his feet;" the foot of his bed, as we should say. So also rr. 7, 8.

he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art ^f Ezek. 16. 8. ^g ch. 2. 20. ^h ver. 12. ⁱ ch. 2. 20. ^j ch. 1. 8.

¹⁰ ^u a near kinsman. And he said, ^a Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than ^{at} the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not ¹¹ young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the ^{city} of ¹² my people doth know that thou art ^k a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy ^l near kinsman: howbeit ^m there is a ¹³ kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will ⁿ perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then I will do the part of a kinsman to thee, ^o as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

¹⁴ ¶ And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, ^p Let it not be known ¹⁵ that a woman came into the floor. Also he said, Bring the ^q vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six ^r measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she ¹⁶ went into the city. And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all ¹⁷ that the man had done to her. And she said, These six ^r measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy ¹⁸ mother in law. Then said she, ^s Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

CHAP. 4. THEN went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, ^t the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And ² he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of ^{the} elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat

¹ Or, took hold on.² Or, one that hath right to redeem.³ Heb. gate.⁴ Or, sheet, or, apron.

8. turned himself] Rather, "bent forward," so as to feel what it was which was at his feet. The same word is translated "took hold of," in Judg. xvi. 29.

9. spread thy skirt, &c.] The phrase indicates receiving and acknowledging her as a wife.

10. thou hast shewed more kindness, &c.] Lit., "Thou hast made thy last kindness better than the first." Her last kindness was her willingness to accept Boaz for her husband, advanced in years as he was.

12, 13. By "kinsman," understand the goel (ii. 20 note).

15. the vail] Quite a different word from that rendered vail, in Gen. xxxviii. 14. It seems rather to mean a kind of loose cloak, worn over the ordinary dress (see marg.).

six measures] i.e. six seahs, in all two ephahs, twice as much as she gleaned (ii. 17), and a heavy load to carry; for which reason he laid it on her, probably placed it

on her head. It is well known that women can carry great weights when duly poised on the head.

and she went into the city] The Hebrew has "he went," viz. Boaz, where accordingly we find him (iv. 1).

16. who art thou, my daughter?] In the dim twilight (v. 14) her mother was not sure at first who the young woman was, who sought admittance into the house.

IV. 1. The gate is the place of concourse, of business, and of justice in Oriental cities (see Judg. xix. 15 note; Gen. xxxiv. 20; Deut. xvi. 18).

Ho, such a one!] Indicating that the name of the kinsman was either unknown or purposely concealed (1 Sam. xxi. 2; 2 K. vi. 8).

2. Every city was governed by elders (see Deut. xix. 12; Judg. viii. 14). For the number ten, cp. Ex. xviii. 25. Probably the presence of, at least, ten elders was

- 3 down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which
 4 *was* our brother Elimelech's: and ¹I thought to advertise thee, saying, ²Buy it ³before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: ⁴for *there is* none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he
 5 said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead, ⁶to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. ⁷And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.
 8 ⁸Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and
 9 this *was a testimony* in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. ¶ And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.
 10 Moreover Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, ¹¹that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that *were* in the gate, and

^c Jer. 32. 7.

^d Gen. 23. 18.

^e Lev. 25. 25.

^f Gen. 38. 8.

Deut. 25. 5.

ch. 3. 13.

Matt. 22. 24.

^g ch. 3. 12.

^h Deut. 25.

7, 9.

ⁱ Deut. 25. 6.

¹ Heb. *I said I will reveal in thine ear.*

necessary to make a lawful public assembly, as among modern Jews *ten* are necessary to constitute a synagogue.

3. According to the law (Levit. xxv. 25-28), if any Israelite, through poverty, would sell his possession, the next of kin (the *goel*) had a right to redeem it by paying the value of the number of years remaining till the jubilee (see marg. ref.). This right Boaz advertises the *goel* of, so as to give him the option which the law secured to him of redeeming "our brother Elimelech's" land, *i.e.* our kinsman's, according to the common use of the term *brother*, for near relation (see Gen. xiii. 8, xxiv. 27; Lev. xxv. 25; Num. xxvii. 4; Judg. ix. 1).

4. See marg.; a phrase explained by the act of removing the end of the turban, or the hair, in order to whisper in the ear (see 1 Sam. ix. 15; 2 Sam. vii. 27).

5. Observe the action of the law of Levirate. Had there been no one interested but Naomi, she would have sold the land unclogged by any condition, the law of Levirate having no existence in her case. But there was a young widow upon whom the possession of the land would devolve at Naomi's death, and who already had a right of partnership in it, and the law of Levirate did apply in her case. It was, therefore, the duty of the *goel* to marry her and raise up seed to his brother, *i.e.* his kinsman. And he could not exercise his right of redeeming

the land, unless he was willing at the same time to fulfil his obligations to the deceased by marrying the widow. This he was unwilling to do.

6. *I mar mine own inheritance*] The meaning of these words is doubtful. Some explain them by saying that the *goel* had a wife and children already, and would not introduce strife into his family. Others think that there was a risk (which he would not incur) of the *goel's* own name being blotted out from his inheritance (r. 10). Others take the word translated *mar* in a sense of *wasting* or *spending*. If he had to find the purchase-money, and support Naomi and Ruth, his own fortune would be broken down, if, as is likely, he was a man of slender means. Boaz, being "a mighty man of wealth," could afford this.

redeem thou my right, &c.] Literally, *redeem my redemption*—perform that act of redemption which properly belongs to me, but which I cannot perform.

7. *in former time in Israel*] Showing that the custom was obsolete in the writer's days. The letter of the law (see marg. ref.) was not strictly followed. It was thought sufficient for the man to pull off his own shoe and give it to the man to whom he ceded his right, in the presence of the elders of his city.

11. See marg. There is something of a poetical turn in this speech of the elders,

the elders, said, *We are witnesses.* ^kThe LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did ^lbuild the house of Israel: and ^ldo thou worthily in 12 ^mEphratah, and ⁿbe famous in Beth-lehem: and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, ⁿwhom Tamar bare unto Judah, of ^othe seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman. 13 ¶ So Boaz ^ptook Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, ^qthe LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son. 14 And ^rthe women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not ^sleft thee this day without a ^tkinsman, that his name 15 may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy* life, and ^ua nourisher of ^vthine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is ^wbetter to thee than seven 16 sons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in 17 her bosom, and became nurse unto it. ^xAnd the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of 18 Jesse, the father of David. ¶ Now these *are* the generations of 19 Pharez: ^yPharez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and 20 Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat ^zNahshon, and 21 Nahshon begat ^{aa}Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz 22 begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat ^{ab}David.

¹ Or, *get thee riches, or, power.*

² Heb. *proclaim thy name.*

³ Heb. *caused to cease unto thee.*

⁴ Or, *redeemer.*

⁵ Heb. *to nourish*, Gen. 45. 11. Ps. 55. 22.

⁶ Heb. *thy gray hairs.*

⁷ Or, *Salmah.*

^k Ps. 127. 3. & 128. 3.

^l Deut. 25. 9.

^m Gen. 35.

16, 19.

ⁿ Gen. 38. 20.

1 Chr. 2. 4.

^o Matt. 1. 3.

^p 1 Sam. 2.

20.

^q ch. 3. 11.

^r Gen. 29. 31.

& 33. 5.

^s Luke 1. 58.

Rom. 12. 15.

^t 1 Sam. 1. 8.

^u Luke 1. 58,

59.

^v 1 Chr. 2.

4, &c.

Matt. 1. 3.

^w Num. 1. 7.

^x Matt. 1. 4.

^y 1 Chr. 2. 15.

Matt. 1. 6.

and something prophetic in the blessing pronounced by them. It is unique and obscure. The Greek Version is unintelligible. Jerome seems to have had a slightly different reading, since he applies both clauses to Ruth. "May she be a pattern of virtue in Ephratah, and have a name famous in Beth-lehem." The meaning of "be famous" seems to be, *Get thyself a name which shall be celebrated in Bethlehem*, as the head of a powerful and illustrious house: literally it is, *proclaim a name*, i.e. cause others to proclaim thy name, as in r. 14.

14. *without a kinsman*] i.e. Boaz, not the infant Obed.

17. *Obed*] i.e. *serving*, with allusion to the service of love and duty which he would render to his grandmother Naomi.

18. It is probable that there was a family-

book for the house of Pharez, in which their genealogies were preserved, and important bits of history were recorded; and that the book of Ruth was compiled from it. (See Gen. ii. 4 note.)

21. *Salmon begat Boaz*] St. Matthew has preserved the additional interesting information that the mother of Boaz was Rahab (Josh. ii., vi.). It is possible that the circumstance that the mother of Boaz was a Canaanite may have made him less indisposed to marry Ruth the Moabitess. As regards the whole genealogy in rr. 18-22, it should be remarked that it occurs four times in Scripture, viz. here, 1 Chr. ii. 10-12; Matt. i. 3-6; and Luke iii. 32, 33, and is of course of singular importance as being the genealogy of our Lord. One or two difficulties in it still remain unsolved.